DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 187 324 IR 008 376

AUTHOR Dougherty, R. M.
TITLE The ISO Standards for Periodicals and Their Application.
PUB DATE Aug 79
NOTE 8p.; Paper presented at the Conference of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (45th, Copenhagen, Denmark, August 27-September 1, 1979). Best copy available.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Developing Nations; *Editing; Library Standards; Opinions; *Periodicals; Standards
IDENTIFIERS *International Organization for Standardization

ABSTRACT

This discussion of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) standards that deal with periodicals shows how these adopted and recommended standards can be useful to editors of newly established journals, especially those in emerging nations. It describes the standards in detail, and suggests that those who wish to publish a journal should consider whether (1) there is a need for it, (2) sufficient monetary resources are available, and (3) there are authors willing and able to contribute to the new publication. (FM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED187324

IFLA COUNCIL 1979

Division: Education and Research

Round Table: Editors of Library Journals

881LIBJ13E

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

The ISO standards for periodicals and their application

by

DOUGHERTY, R.M., Director,
University Library,
The University of Michigan
ANN ARBOR, USA

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Carol Kucen Henry

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

IR008376

THE ISO STANDARDS FOR PERIODICALS AND THEIR APPLICATION

By

Richard M. Dougherty, Director
University Library
The University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109
U.S.A.

My assignment is to discuss the ISO standards that deal with periodicals, and how these adopted and recommended standards can be useful to editors of newly established journals, particularly those begun in emerging nations. As one learns more about library developments throughout the world, it seems clear that there is a pressing and continuing need for professional librarians in the emerging countries to communicate their ideas and common problems with colleagues whether they be problems of publishing journals or constructing international interlibrary loan policies. The obstacles to communication are very formidable. Not only must one overcome language barriers, but also the reality that social and economic conditions differ throughout the world. No one solution seems applicable to all regions. When one examines the question of journal publishing, it may be that some countries may require only one newsletter or journal, others might require and be able to support a journal for each library specialty.

The ISO (International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards institutes. The work of developing standards is conducted by means of Technical Committees. ISO publishes separate English and French versions; some standards are also translated into Russian. ISO issues a catalog periodically that not only lists all standards currently available, and in what languages, but also with the addresses of ISO member organizations. This is particularly helpful since one can learn if one's own

country has promulgated local standards. Documents can be obtained by writing to: International Organization for Standardization, Case Postale 56, CH-1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland.

The ISO has published many periodical-related standards that will provide useful guidance to an editor. The application of the standards will help present an orderly publication, one that readers will find easy to consult, and one which will facilitate a publication's assimilation into the international system of bibliography.

It is not clear to me how many editors are aware of the existence of the ISO standards. Even in the United States with its long history of publishing in library science, more publications don't even adhere to all ANSI standards (American National Standards Institute) let alone the ISO adopted standards or recommended standards. I have been active in publishing since 1975, and I only first learned of the ISO standards at the Strbske Pleso meeting. Obviously, the standards have never been formally adopted by my journal, although I confess some readers may detect some minor changes in our format in the next few months.

Before describing some of the existing ISO standards in greater detail, I would like to address other, but related questions. Adoption and adherence to standards is important, but to an individual or an organization about to launch a new periodical, issues related to insuring survival of that periodical seem of greater concern. What good are standards if an editor cannot afford to purchase the paper upon which to print the articles, or if the printer is so unreliable that subscribers become discouraged and cancel their subscriptions. Last year I was very impressed by the paper presented to the members of our own

round table by Kwame Nyarko, editor of the Ghana Library Journal. My growing awareness of the obstacles which my editor colleagues in the emerging nations must overcome in order to publish each issue only heightens my admiration of their professional dedication. While one can argue that an editor from the United States could never fully understand or appreciate the problems that an editor in an African country must resolve daily, my own experiences have given me a perspective that can be gained only by one who has risked his own money and devoted a large part of his personal time to starting a new professional journal.

I believed there was a need for the Journal of Academic Librarianship and that professionals would subscribe to it. My partner, William H. Webb, and I began the project even though many friends counseled against the venture. I don't know what gave us the confidence to begin in the face of so many well-established American journals, e.g., American Libraries, Library Journal, College and Research Libraries, and Library Resources and Technical Services.

The first two years were particularly difficult. We typed our own mailing lists, performed our own typesetting--sometimes between the hours of midnight and six o'clock in the morning in order to get a price break from the printer, typed our invoices, and stuffed by hand each individual issue. All in all, it was an unforgetable experience. We are about to complete our fifth year of publication, and after five years I believe we are considered established by the American library community. Paradoxically, in the last three years several new journals have appeared on the scene. Some of you may be familiar with these new titles. The include The Serials Librarian, Collection Management, Journal of Research, Online, and The Administrative Librarian. This is particularly ironic since almost no new journal was established during the period of great

growth in the 1960s. Why did we wait until money to purchase new publications became so scarce before beginning new publications? I have no rational explanation, but I wish I could have started our journal in 1969 and not 1975.

Based on my understanding of publishing, a new editor/publisher must resolve issues of initial funding and continuing production, distribution, creating a readership, and quality of contents. The most critical problem facing the editor of a new journal in an emerging country is to secure sufficient monetary support to ensure the long-term viability of the publication. The situation as described by Nyarko in English-speaking West Africa will not cause one to become sanguine about the future of publishing in librarianship in that region, yet I know the library professiona is extremely active. I base this statement on the number and variety of manuscripts I have received from practicing librarians in Nigeria alone since I began editing journals in 1966.

One must be convinced that there is a genuine need, a need so great that support for continuation beyond the initial publication will be forthcoming. That support might take the form of reader subscriptions, association or government subsidies, or a combination thereof. If a publishing venture is begun with funding available for only the first two or three issues, the chances are great that the first two or three issues will be the only ones that will ever appear in print.

The content of the initial issues is particularly important, probably more critical than the quality of articles that appear in later issues. It is the initial articles that must persuade readers to support the journal with their own money, and to contribute their own ideas in the form of papers. It is my belief that papers published should focus on problems and solutions to immediate

problems. Scholarly treatises on esoteric topics may bring status among peers, but status will not guarantee subscribers.

The physical appearance of a journal is also important. A slickly designed, multi-colored publication may attract attention, but the costs of design and publication will be significantly greater than otherwise necessary. However, one should not dismiss the importance of an attractive looking publication. There is research that says the physical appearance of a journal tends either to attract or discourage readership. It never ceases to amaze me how many American and English journals are laid out so pedantically. And, why do so many journals adopt type font sizes that few beyond the age of 40 are able to read comfortably? One can save some money by reducing the type font from 11 points to 10 or 9 points, but one may also lose readers in the process. It is my recommendation that one begins modestly and gradually improves the physical appearance of a new journal.

In short, I'm suggesting that one should be convinced there is a reasonable chance for success before launching a new publication. I think most here would acknowledge that the obstacles confronting the editor/publisher in the emerging nation or region are more formidable than those faced by their counterparts from the industralized world. For this reason, it seems even more important for the concerned professional to engage in a thorough, realistic planning process long before the first manuscript is accepted for publication.

Let me now proceed under the assumption that the decision to proceed with the publication has been rendered. It is at this point that application of the ISO standards is useful. As I noted earlier, many standards are available. There are standards which are useful to editors in planning the physical layout and bibliographical information, as well as standards which the editor may

recommend to authors for preparation of manuscripts. Guidelines to Authors, ISO-R215, provides guidances on the use of (1) headings, (2) preparation of synopsis and translations, (3) placement of notes, (4) bibliographic references, (5) tables and illustrations, and (6) the use of symbols and abbreviations.

ISO No. 8-1977 (E) was designed to assist editors and publishers to present periodicals in a form that would facilitate their use. This standard presents guidelines that can be used to layout the physical format, and it also lists specific instructions as to what bibliographical information should be included in the journal. Among the guides listed are the following: use of running titles, numbering of pages, and layout of pages. In addition there are also standards for the presentation of contents lists, ISO/R 18, the preparation of volume indexes, ISO 999, and the preparation and use of abstracts, ISO 214-1976 (E).

To summarize briefly, there are many existing international publishing standards that will be helpful to those who desire to publish a journal that can be assimilated easily into the world's bibliographic structure, but for aspiring editors there are questions more fundamental than the physical and bibliographical format of a new publication. It is not enough to harbor the desire. The first requirement is a general recognition that a new journal is needed, second, that sufficient monetary resources are available, and third, there are authors who are willing and able to contribute to the new publication. If these three conditions can be satisfied, the chances are good that the new publication will be a success and the awareness and application of the ISO standards will then lessen the problems and decisions that face the editor in the final stages of layout and design.